

SECTION I—CLAIMS

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Claims 1-25 are canceled herein without prejudice. New claims 26-44 are presented herein. Claims 26-44 remain pending in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-25. (Canceled).

26. (New) A method in a packet forwarder, comprising:
receiving a connection request from a computing device requesting access to a network;
issuing the computing device a first Internet Protocol (IP) address assigned to a first Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN) communicably interfaced with the packet forwarder,
wherein the first VLAN does not provide access to the network and is isolated from a permanent VLAN that provides access to the network;
sending the computing device an authentication request via the first VLAN based on the first IP address, responsive to the connection request;
receiving authentication credentials from the computing device via the first VLAN, responsive to the authentication request;
issuing the computing device a replacement IP address assigned to the permanent VLAN for communication with the network, responsive to receiving satisfactory authentication credentials from the computing device; and
forwarding network packets between the computing device and the network over the permanent

VLAN based on the replacement IP address.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein receiving the connection request from the computing device requesting access to the network comprises:

intercepting a request from the computing device for a web page.

28. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein sending the computing device the authentication request comprises:

directing the computing device to a network login page for authentication, the network login page accessible on the first VLAN.

29. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein receiving the authentication credentials from the computing device via the first VLAN, responsive to the authentication request comprises: receiving at least a user name and a password from the computing device based on information captured by the network login page.

30. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein directing the computing device to the network login page for authentication comprises:

responding to the computing device with a redirect to a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) address for the network login page.

31. (New) The method of claim 26, further comprising:
sending the authentication credentials to an authentication server; and
receiving an indication from the authentication server that the authentication credentials are authentic and that a user associated with the authentication credentials is authorized to access the network.

32. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein sending the authentication credentials to the authentication server comprises:

creating a packet comprising the authentication credentials in accordance with a Remote Authentication Dial-In User Service (RADIUS) communications protocol; and forwarding the packet to a RADIUS server for authentication.

33. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the packet forwarder comprises a switch device located at an edge of the network to provide packet-forwarding services into the network.

34. (New) The method of claim 26, further comprising:

terminating forwarding of the network packets between the computing device and the network based on one or more events including:

exceeding a pre-determined period of inactivity by the computing device;

receiving a reset signal is from a network login controller communicably interfaced with the packet forwarder;

receiving a termination command from an administrator account requesting forwarding of the network packets between the computing device and the network be terminated;

determining a network connection between the computing device and the packet forwarder is disconnected; and

determining a user of the computing device has logged off of the computing device.

35. (New) A computer-readable medium having instructions stored thereon that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a method comprising:

receiving a connection request at a packet forwarder from a computing device requesting access to a network;

issuing the computing device a first Internet Protocol (IP) address assigned to a first Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN) communicably interfaced with the packet forwarder, wherein the first VLAN does not provide access to the network and is isolated from a

permanent VLAN that provides access to the network;
sending the computing device an authentication request via the first VLAN based on the first IP address, responsive to the connection request;
receiving authentication credentials from the computing device via the first VLAN, responsive to the authentication request;
issuing the computing device a replacement IP address assigned to the permanent VLAN for communication with the network, responsive to receiving satisfactory authentication credentials from the computing device; and
forwarding network packets between the computing device and the network over the permanent VLAN based on the replacement IP address.

36. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein receiving the connection request from the computing device requesting access to the network comprises:
intercepting a request from the computing device for a web page.

37. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 35, wherein:
sending the computing device the authentication request comprises directing the computing device to a network login page for authentication, the network login page accessible on the first VLAN; and wherein
receiving the authentication credentials from the computing device via the first VLAN, responsive to the authentication request comprises receiving user identification data from the computing device based on information captured by the network login page.

38. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 37, wherein directing the computing device to the network login page for authentication comprises:
responding to the computing device with a redirect to a Uniform Resource Locator (URL)

address for the network login page.

39. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 35, further comprising:
sending the authentication credentials to a Remote Authentication Dial-In User Service
(RADIUS) compatible authentication server; and
receiving an indication from the RADIUS compatible authentication server that the authentication credentials are authentic and that a user associated with the authentication credentials is authorized to access the network.

40. (New) A system comprising:
means for receiving a connection request at a packet forwarder from a computing device requesting access to a network;
means for issuing the computing device a first Internet Protocol (IP) address assigned to a first Virtual Local Area Network (VLAN) communicably interfaced with the packet forwarder, wherein the first VLAN does not provide access to the network and is isolated from a permanent VLAN that provides access to the network;
means for sending the computing device an authentication request via the first VLAN based on the first IP address, responsive to the connection request;
means for receiving authentication credentials from the computing device via the first VLAN, responsive to the authentication request;
means for issuing the computing device a replacement IP address assigned to the permanent VLAN for communication with the network, responsive to receiving satisfactory authentication credentials from the computing device; and
means for forwarding network packets between the computing device and the network over the permanent VLAN based on the replacement IP address.

41. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 40, wherein receiving the connection request from the computing device requesting access to the network comprises:

means for intercepting a request from the computing device for a web page.

42. (New) The system of claim 40, wherein:

sending the computing device the authentication request comprises means for directing the computing device to a network login page for authentication, the network login page accessible on the first VLAN; and wherein

receiving the authentication credentials from the computing device via the first VLAN, responsive to the authentication request comprises means for receiving a user identification card from the computing device based on information captured by the network login page.

43. (New) The system of claim 42, wherein directing the computing device to the network login page for authentication comprises:

means for responding to the computing device with a redirect to a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) address for the network login page.

44. (New) The system of claim 40, further comprising:

means for sending the authentication credentials to a Remote Authentication Dial-In User Service (RADIUS) compatible authentication server; and

means for receiving an indication from the RADIUS compatible authentication server that the authentication credentials are authentic and that a user associated with the authentication credentials is authorized to access the network.